

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Wayne James Out On \$100,000 Bond; Will Remain Under House Arrest Until Trial

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ST. CROIX -- Federal Judge Ruth Miller on Wednesday issued an order releasing Wayne James, who was indicted on October 1, 2015, on two counts of wire fraud and one count of federal program embezzlement and is facing multiple years imprisonment, to the custody of his sister Grete James Garcia, and her husband Kwame Garcia.

The couple used property to jointly post the \$100,000 bond to ensure Mr. James's release. In a document seeking the release, Mr. James's attorney Michael Joseph assured the judge that Mrs. James Garcia understood the profoundness of her duty in keeping an eye on her brother 24-7. And that Mr. Garcia, who is the director of the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service, and also an assistance

professor, would help his wife with monitoring at times when she needs to leave the residence, contending that Mr. Garcia's senior status at U.V.I. gives him the flexibility to do so.

Judge Miller also granted a continuance to December 31, however she did not set a new trial date.

According to a federal indictment, from 2009 to 2011, Mr. James, 55, served as chair of the Senate Committee on Youth, Education and Culture in the 28th Legislature. While serving as the chair, Mr. James allegedly obtained tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars for the purpose of acquiring and translating historical documents related to the "Fireburn," an 1878 uprising by freed slaves in St. Croix.

The indictment alleges that Mr. James submitted false documents to the Legislature and received cash advances in order to conduct historical research on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands. Mr. James embezzled the cash advances for his own personal benefit instead of using them for the intended purposes, according to the indictment.

An indictment is merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law, according to the U.S. D.O.J.

Italian paper Gazzetta Di Modena [showed Mr. James being taken into custody](#) by Italian police late June. Mr. James, who once lived in the province of Pisa, sponsored an amateur football team in Italy, according to the paper. He was traced to an apartment in Nonantola, Italy, where he was a guest of some friends in the city of [Modena](#), and was intent on writing a book titled "Manly Manners", which contains a chapter dedicated to traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena.

The FBI, Office of the Virgin Islands Inspector General and Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation are investigating the case. Trial attorneys Amanda R. Vaughn and Justin D. Weitz of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and the U.S. Attorney's Office of the District of the Virgin Islands are prosecuting the case. Cristina M. Posa of the Justice Department's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in this matter, according to the U.S. D.O.J.